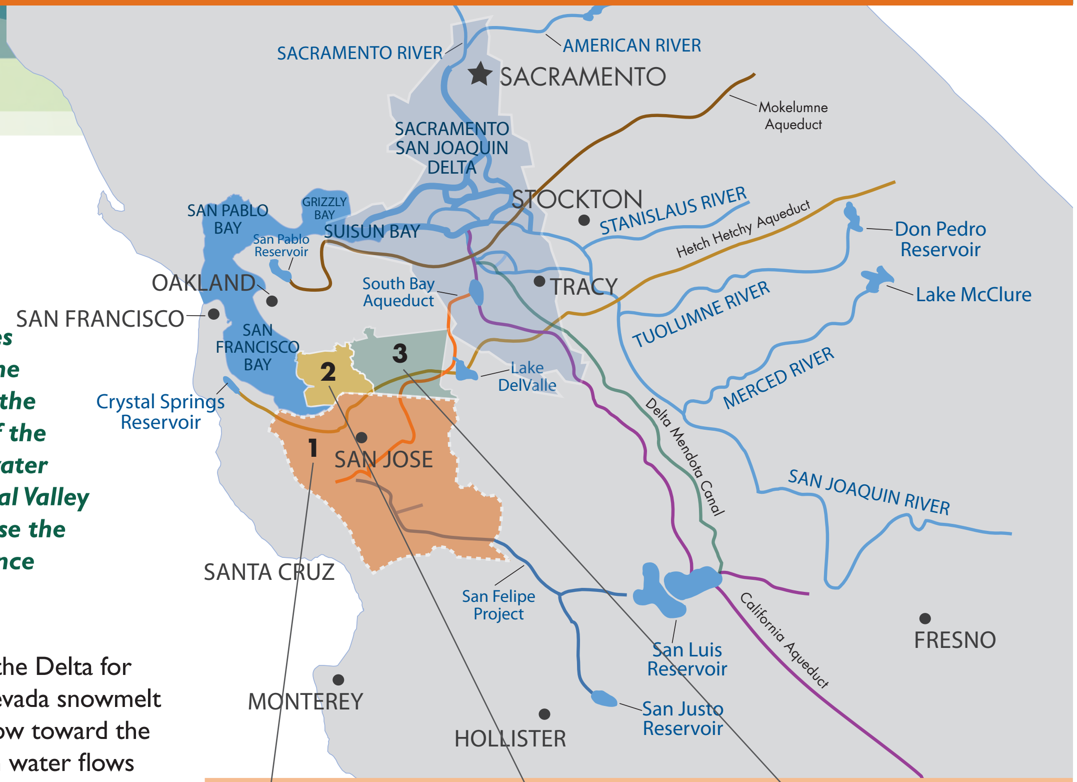
Restoring the Delta

Protecting our Future



The Delta serves as a unique "hub" in California's water system, receiving runoff from other watersheds that goes for many beneficial uses throughout the state. The Delta provides a portion of the drinking water for nearly two-thirds of the state's population.…the two largest water systems in the state–the federal Central Valley Project and the State Water Project–use the Delta as a hub of their water conveyance system. —Delta Stewardship Council

The San Francisco Bay Area depends on the Delta for 2/3 of its drinking water supply. Sierra Nevada snowmelt and rainfall fills rivers and streams that flow toward the San Francisco Bay. Much of that mountain water flows through the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta to communities throughout the Bay Area.

The Delta is an essential feature of our water system. Yet, after decades of alterations, the Delta is far from the natural estuary it once was. The Delta's 150-year old man-made network of levees is old and fragile.

Without an effective conservation and renewal strategy, the Delta's sensitive ecosystem and water transport system will continue to deteriorate, threatening the delivery of safe, reliable drinking water to the nearly 2.5 million residents that we serve in the East Bay and Silicon Valley.

The statewide Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) effort is attempting to achieve **water supply reliability** and **ecosystem restoration for the Delta**. To sustain our economy and our way of life, we must find a balanced solution that restores the Delta ecosystem and assures long-term sustainable water supplies.

① Santa Clara Valley Water District

Provides services to:
15 cities throughout Santa Clara County

Serves:
1,800,000 people

40%

Delta-conveyed water

All sources:
40% Delta-conveyed water
40% groundwater and local surface water
15% San Francisco Regional Water System (Sierra Nevada source)
5% recycled water

② Alameda County Water District

Provides services to:
Fremont, Newark, Union City

Serves:
340,000 people

40%

Delta-conveyed water

All sources:
40% Delta-conveyed water
25% groundwater and local surface water
20% San Francisco Regional Water System (Sierra Nevada source)
15% Desalination

③ Zone 7 Water Agency

Provides services to:
Dublin, Pleasanton, Livermore, Dougherty Valley

Serves:
220,000 people

87%

Delta-conveyed water

All sources:
87% Delta-conveyed water
13% local surface water

Bay Delta by the numbers

Be informed. Know the facts. Get involved. Our future depends on it.

Beau Goldie, CEO
Santa Clara Valley Water District

Santa Clara Valley Water District

Jill Duerig
General Manager
Zone 7 Water Agency

LIVERMORE-AMADOR VALLEY
19 ZONE 7 57
WATER SUPPLY • FLOOD PROTECTION

Walt L Wadlow

Walt Wadlow
General Manager
Alameda County Water District

ACWD
ALAMEDA COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

Benefits of Bay Delta Conservation Plan

Significant improvement in California's drinking water delivery system

The BDCP creates a long-term plan for improving the state's existing water delivery system which needs urgent attention.

There is a two-in-three chance that 100-year floods or earthquakes will cause catastrophic flooding and significant change in the Delta by 2050. —Jeffrey Mount, UC Davis

The BDCP reduces the risks of water pumping restrictions which have already affected Bay Area and statewide water supply and created uncertainty regarding future reliability.

Water deliveries from the Delta have been reduced significantly in recent years due to years of drought and other systemic problems in the Delta. Left unaddressed, this will create tremendous impacts on California's economy, environment, agricultural industry and millions of residents throughout the state. —Delta Stewardship Council

Economic certainty for the Bay Area's business community, including Silicon Valley

The BDCP enhances and protects California's extensive water delivery system which is critical to our economic vitality and key to maintaining our competitive advantage.

Water is indeed vital to the California economy… It is a scarce resource, subject to numerous and competing demands—including increasing demands for environmental uses. —Public Policy Institute of California

Water shortages would have severe economic consequences. Water reduction scenarios of 10%-30% would result in a decrease in revenue of $883 million to more than $10 billion in Santa Clara County alone. —David Sunding, PhD, The Brattle Group

The BDCP improves water quality, benefiting industrial processes and reducing costs to business operations.

The development of the Delta's lands, the channelization of its waterways, the discharge of pollutants, the introduction of non-native species, the alteration of flows, and the diversions of water from the system have combined to degrade the quality of water and habitat. —Public Policy Institute of California

Unprecedented ecosystem restoration and conservation investments in the Delta

The BDCP supports the recovery of endangered or threatened aquatic species and their habitat.

Many factors have contributed to the Delta's decline. Agricultural, industrial and urban runoff has polluted its waters. Invasive, non-native species have adversely impacted the food chain and, as a result, native fish and wildlife populations suffer. —Delta Stewardship Council

The BDCP restores tens of thousands of acres of tidal marsh and other habitat lost in past decades.

Ecological investments in the Delta will ultimately benefit California's economy by securing higher-quality, more reliable water for agriculture and urban use, averting expensive responses to natural disasters, and expanding recreational opportunities. Ecosystem and economic objectives are mutually dependent. —Public Policy Institute of California

Collaborative multi-year process is developing science-based solutions

The BDCP addresses one of the most complex resource issues in California and has been championed by both a Republican and Democratic governor.

The BDCP represents the best, most collaborative decision-making effort to date on these elusive and intractable issues. Its successful completion and implementation is imperative for California's future. —Lester Snow, Secretary for Natural Resources under Governor Schwarzenegger

The BDCP process has brought together local water agencies, environmental and conservation organizations, state and federal agencies, agricultural and other interest groups to develop solutions that are publicly-available and reviewed by independent scientific experts.

A unique confluence of disparate interests have come together in the BDCP, making it perhaps the best hope of a broadly-supported, comprehensive solution today. —California Farm Bureau Federation

Myths vs. Facts

MYTH **We can conserve our way out of our water problems.**

FACTS Water use efficiency is increasing; per capita water use is decreasing.

- Santa Clara County has reduced its water use by 15% since 1990 with a population growth of 300,000.
- Despite an increase in population of 28%, Alameda County Water District customers are using the same amount as they did in 1990.
- Zone 7 Water Agency customers have reduced their consumption by over 20% for a population that has nearly doubled! Agricultural use has been cut by over 20% through more efficient irrigation methods.

While conservation will continue to be an extremely important tool, even the greatest commitment to water use efficiency would not supplant imported water.

MYTH **We just need to fix the Delta's levees.**

FACTS Many of the 1,100 miles of Delta levees are built on soft peat soils around islands up to 25 feet below sea level that are continuing to sink. Replacing or shoring up these levees would be very costly and challenging, particularly in light of climate change and sea level rise.

The instability and interdependence of levees failure of one levee can affect others are likely to be major issues for achieving any measure of water-supply reliability or ecosystem rehabilitation. Continuing the status quo of improving levees will not always be the most environmentally sustainable or economically defensible response in the years ahead. —National Research Council of the National Academies

MYTH **We don't need a Peripheral Canal.**

FACTS A key component to any complete Delta solution is the construction of a new water conveyance (delivery) facility. The existing system has turned the Delta, originally a fluctuating-salinity estuary, into a freshwater basin. It has also created unnatural north to south flows in the Delta, confusing native species and disturbing the ecosystem.

Peripheral canal is the best approach for addressing both ecosystem and economic risks. Instead of pulling water through the Delta to the pumps (the current system), a peripheral canal (or tunnel) would tap water upstream on the Sacramento River and move it around (or underneath) the Delta to the pumps. —Public Policy Institute of California

MYTH **Any new facilities would damage the Delta.**

FACTS The Delta is among the most modified deltaic systems in the world. New facilities would be designed to restore natural flow patterns. A new facility would set strict limits on water flows and provide the flexibility to take advantage of increased supplies in wet winters as insurance against future dry years.

This change would be good for native fish: fewer would be trapped in the pumps and most would benefit from an increase in natural tidal flows within the Delta. A peripheral canal or tunnel has the best potential for safeguarding the Delta's environment while maintaining water supply reliability. —Public Policy Institute of California

MYTH **Nothing has happened yet, so what's the big deal?**

FACTS California is experiencing major water issues. There are already restrictions on water deliveries through the Delta. Growing recognition of California's changing conditions and mounting threats have brought competing stakeholders together to act. The time for solutions is now.

The Delta of the future will be affected by worsening land subsidence, heightened seismic risk and possible effects of climate change (both sea level rise and changes in storm timing, intensity, and frequency). —California Natural Resources Agency, Department of Water Resources, and Department of Fish and Game

New water delivery facilities will create between 80,000 and 130,000 new construction and operation jobs. —David Sunding, PhD, The Brattle Group

California's current water system raises several red flags. Catastrophic interruptions of water supplies from earthquakes and floods could cause large short-term losses; unreliable supplies could also jeopardize business and infrastructure investments that support economic growth. —Public Policy Institute of California

Meeting the Bay Area's water needs

Our region depends upon clean reliable water supplies. Our agencies manage complex integrated water systems that not only provide safe drinking water for children and families but also water for neighborhoods and businesses, the environment and wildlife, fire protection, agriculture and recreation. We have managed through water shortages, droughts, earthquakes and floods. And we have instituted many measures to increase water use efficiency in our regions in order to reduce our reliance on the Delta.

We must continue to innovate and adapt to changing conditions. That is why we are exploring and developing new technologies and best practices around water storage and groundwater banking, conservation and water recycling, stormwater-capture and desalination. As important as these local measures are, they do not eliminate the need for a workable Delta solution that restores the health of the Delta ecosystem and assures sustainable water supplies.

Our agencies have been actively involved in this process for years, and we are committed to working toward a balanced solution that is based on sound science and effective water management and ensures our region's ongoing health and vitality. **Our future depends on it.**

What others say about the BDCP...

Recognizing the primacy of water issues to the health of our state and businesses, the Silicon Valley Leadership Group supports moving forward with the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) process.
—Silicon Valley Leadership Group

The (Bay Delta) Conservation Plan aims to provide a framework for issuing those permits that guarantees sufficient water for wildlife. The plan also hopes to achieve comprehensive protection for threatened and endangered species through an ecosystem-focused approach.
—Environmental Defense Fund

The risk of inaction is unacceptable. An earthquake could cut off a key water supply to 25 million people in the state and more than 3 million acres of prime farmland, hurting families, businesses, communities and our economy. Restoring a reliable water supply is key to the long-term economic stability of Silicon Valley, the San Joaquin Valley and Southern California. —Regional Economic Association Leaders of California

The BDCP promises to make a major contribution toward resolving California's current water crisis. The one thing that is absolutely certain is that unwavering opposition to California's efforts to solve the water crisis is not in anyone's better interest. —California Resources Secretary, John Laird

The BDCP process, in tandem with the Delta Stewardship Council, offers perhaps the best chance to restore the ailing Delta ecosystem, and provide a more sustainable future for the Delta and California water supplies. —The Nature Conservancy

Simply put, it is the large urban population centers that will suffer the greatest social, economic, and environmental harm if an earthquake or other natural disaster disrupts Delta water supplies. The evidence is clear that until the conveyance improvements and environmental investments proposed in the BDCP are put in place, the economic, social, and environmental well-being of California's urban communities is at risk.
—California Latino Water Coalition and California State Conference of the NAACP

We agree that the status quo is not acceptable and a new approach for managing water supplies and the aquatic environment in the Delta is necessary. We strongly support the BDCP's co-equal goals of restoring the critically important Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and regaining water supply reliability for cities, farms, and businesses throughout California. —U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer

www.valleywater.org **www.zone7water.com** **www.acwd.org**

www.baydeltaconservationplan.com